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Bangalore Mirror

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Son of auto driver, who helped India win Kho-Kho world cup, talks about his incredible journey to the top

A STAR IS BORN

Team India's success propels sport into spotlight

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Bengaluru has always been a city that nurtures sporting talent, and the latest success story to emerge from the city is that of 27-year-old Gowtham MK. A star player in the Indian Kho-Kho team that recently triumphed in the World Cup, Gowtham's journey to success is nothing short of inspiring. Hailing from a humble background as the son of an auto driver, Gowtham faced many struggles in balancing his passion for sports and the pressure to focus on academics. Despite studying at a government school, his dedication to Kho-Kho has now earned him a spot among India's elite athletes.

In the inaugural World Cup, the Indian men's Kho-Kho team triumphed over Nepal with a commanding 54-36 victory in the final, while the women's team dominated their Nepalese counterparts, securing a 78-40 win.

Reflecting on his early days, Gowtham told Bangalore Mirror, "My journey probably began around 2007-08 when I was in the fourth standard. Initially, I was a sprinter, but my friends at school motivated me to explore Kho-Kho. By the time I was in the fifth standard, I started regular coaching at Chamarajpet Sri Rama Shishu Vihara School. We had school competitions, and there was intense rivalry with other schools, especially during the matches held at Makkalakoota Park, Chamarajpet. The competition was fierce, and it

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

USE YOUR HEAD

Traffic police swoop down on 4 locations, stop riders wearing substandard helmets, give them ISI-certified ones

PAGE 3

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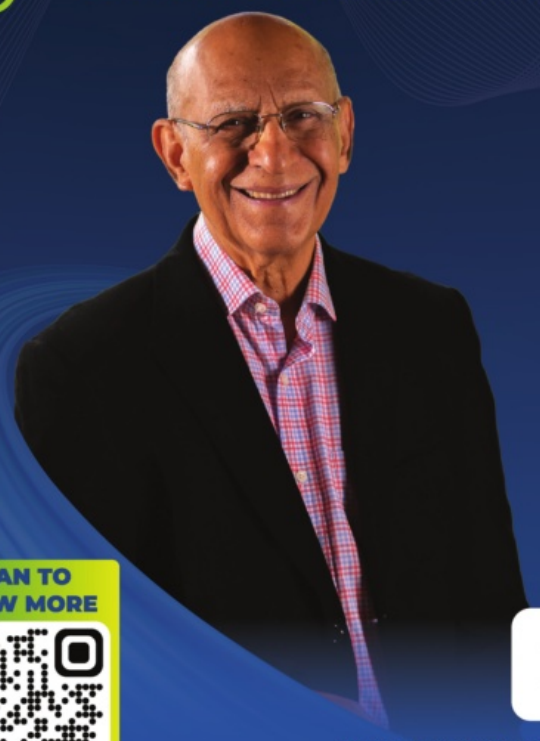

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THINGS TO DO

01 Groove on

Catch the live performance of 'Advaita Crescendo' featuring Dr Suma Sudhindra on veena, Federica Colangelo on piano, Ned McGowan on flute, Karthik Mani on percussion/drums, and Laurent Peckels on bass.
Where: Windmills, Whitefield
When: January 24 & 25, 9:30 pm onwards

02 Musical evening

Banyan Tree's 'Ruhaniyat–Seeking the Divine' is back with So Said the Saints of Maharashtra—Avadhoot Gandhi & Group; Heaven, Earth & Man—Pipa Connects: Chia-Ning Liang (Taiwan); Arabic Tasawwuf Come Alive—Saif Al Ali (UAE) with Aly El Helbawy (Egypt); A Glimpse into the World of Bulleh Shah—Madan Gopal Singh & Chaar Yaar; When Hearts Connect—Indo-Arabic Production; Qawwali—Akbar Nizami & Group.
Where: Jayamahal Palace Hotel Lawns
When: January 24, 6:15 pm onwards

03 Food stories

This Chinese New Year, experience the delightful fusion of two cultures with a big dollop of storytelling with Chef Rungtiwa at the Sheraton Grand Hotel at Brigade Gateway.
Where: Horizon at Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway
When: January 22 to 26, 12:30–3:30 pm (lunch); 6:30–10:30 pm (dinner)

04 Fun learning

Global Village—a celebration of cultural diversity with a perfect blend of entertainment and education, with cultural performances, fashion shows, group dances–Jives, competitions, cultural exhibits, cuisine, and concerts.
Where: Nexus Koramangala Mall
When: January 25 & 26

Who is competent authority for registration of RWAs?

HC notes Registrar of Co-operative Societies to be competent authority, directs it to conduct elections for RWA of apartment in question while hearing writ plea

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PIC FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY

The delay in formulating new rules for the registration of residents' welfare associations (RWAs) has become a hurdle for the existing as well as the new RWAs to carry out day-to-day functions. In one such instance, the High Court, while hearing a writ petition, stated the registration of the Maiden Heights Apartment Owners Welfare Association under the provisions of the Karnataka Societies Registration Act, 1960, has been questioned before this Court in WP No 23487/2023.

However, in the order dated September 19, 2024, the High Court granted liberty to respondent No 3-Association, to register the association within two months under the Karnataka Co-operative Societies Act, 1959. "The provisions of the Karnataka Co-operative Societies Act, 1959, are not applicable to the association consisting of the residential units, and therefore, the association is under an obligation to file a declaration under the provisions of the Karnataka Apartment Ownership Act (KAOA), 1972," the HC oral order read.

The petitioner's grievance is that all the owners of the unit in the apartment are not coming forward to file a declaration under the said Act and therefore, the maintenance of the apartment complex has come to a standstill, and the bank account of the association has been frozen by the respondent No 3 ('bank'), according to the HC order.

> **"We hope that flat owners can now reach out to competent authority if they have any disputes & conduct elections in apartments in a fair manner**
> – Karnataka Home Buyers' Forum

The Court later directed respondent No 2 (Registrar of Co-operative Societies) to take necessary steps to defreeze the account of the association (respondent No 3) and make statutory payments and other payments to carry on day-to-day activities of the association. "Registrar of Co-operative Societies (respondent No 2) is the competent authority under the Act, 1972 and therefore, respondent No 2 is directed to appoint a Returning Officer to conduct elections for all 11 positions in the governing body of the Maiden Heights Apartment Owners Welfare Association within three months, from today," the HC order dated December 20, 2024 read.

Reaction to verdict

Veteran Commander Surendra said that the HC has reiterated that the Registrar of Co Operative Societies is the competent authority and directed to conduct elections for the governing body of the Association. "However, since no association is in existence, the Competent Authority would need to register an Association under KAOA 1972 and conduct the election thereafter," he said.

Positive outcome

Karnataka Home Buyers' Forum expressed their gratitude to HC's clear verdict and said, "A competent authority is expected to register the apartment owners' associations, certify the byelaws, managing committee, and audited financial reports of the associations. If any disputes arise among the members, the competent authority must provide a complaints redressal mechanism to resolve the disputes. We hope, after this order of the honourable High Court, the flat owners can reach out to the competent authority if they have any disputes and conduct elections in the apartments in a fair manner."

Hotels' forum calls Aero Show meat ban for 1 month unscientific

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As the countdown to Aero India begins, a dispute has erupted between the Bruhat Bengaluru Hotels Association (BBHA) and the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) regarding the ban on non-vegetarian food for a longer duration. In a letter, BBHA president PC Rao said, "The decision to impose a ban on meat sales from January 23 to February 17, covering a 26-day period during the Air Show 2025, is completely unscientific. The Air Show will take place from February 10 to 14, and the blanket meat ban, effective in the region for almost a month, is seen as problematic."

Rao said that the region is home to more than 5,000 star hotels, pubs, bars, restaurants, and local eateries catering to the middle class and the general public. Many of these establishments, including popular biryani houses, depend heavily on meat products to serve their customers. A complete shutdown of these businesses is expected to cause significant disruption. "While the authorities may consider closing only the meat shops within the air show vicinity for a week, it is crucial that the hotel industry is not adversely affected by this ban. The decision should ensure minimal disruption to the hospitality sector."

The letter further read, "Hotel waste will be collected in garbage bags and disposed of daily through waste collection vehicles. No food will be allowed to be collected by birds near the hotels. Additionally, meat products will continue to be supplied to guests inside the airfield, and several events, such as weddings, business meetings, and other pre-scheduled gatherings, are already in place. This unnecessary directive is expected to cause considerable damage to the hospitality sector."

Huge crowd gathered on the fourth day of Aero India 2023

It was reported that last week, the BBMP issued orders to the proprietors of meat stalls, non-vegetarian hotels, and restaurants, informing them that all meat, chicken, and fish shops within a 13-km radius of the Yelahanka Air Force Station were to remain closed. Furthermore, the sale and serving of non-vegetarian dishes were to be strictly prohibited in this area from January 23 to February 17. Any violation of these directives would lead to legal action under the BBMP Act 2020 and Rule 91 of the Indian Aircraft Rules, 1937.

Throw out sub-standard helmets & watch your head

Traffic police join with organisation to distribute ISI helmets at 4 major locations in city

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Excuses to avoid helmets include discomfort, aesthetic concerns

In a proactive effort to improve road safety, the Traffic Police, in partnership with Rotary Bangalore Midtown (RBM), launched a campaign addressing the widespread use of substandard helmets by two-wheeler riders. The initiative involved identifying riders and pillion passengers using non-compliant or half helmets at six high-traffic locations across the city and replacing them with ISI-certified helmets.

On Monday alone, a total of 165 ISI-marked helmets were distributed at four major locations in Bengaluru, including Cubbon Park Metro Station, Mehkri Circle, Basaveshwara Circle, and Corporation Circle. These locations were selected based on input from traffic police officials, who highlighted high rates of helmet-related violations in these areas.

RBM volunteers confirmed that the helmets were distributed exclusively to individuals found wearing non-ISI or half helmets, ensuring compliance with safety standards. The surprise campaign is set to continue, with RBM withholding details about upcoming locations and schedules.

This initiative aims not only to enforce the use of helmets but also to educate the public on the critical importance of quality safety gear. By replacing substandard helmets with ISI-certified ones, the campaign seeks to significantly reduce fatalities and injuries caused by road accidents, promoting a culture of road safety in the city.

Helmet-less, half helmet violation tops the list

This campaign becomes necessary to alarming statistics from 2024, where helmetless riders accounted for nearly 70% of Bengaluru's traffic violations. Specifically, over 1.9 million cases involved riders without helmets, and an additional 1.2 million cases pertained to pillion riders without proper headgear. Common excuses ranged from discomfort to aesthetic concerns, underscoring the challenges in enforcing helmet usage.

> **"The campaign addresses the critical issue of preventing head injuries in accidents that are often fatal**
>
> –Traffic police official

The initiative aims to address these issues by not only enforcing helmet usage but also educating the public on the importance of quality safety gear. By replacing substandard helmets with ISI-certified ones, the campaign seeks to reduce fatalities and injuries resulting from road accidents.

"The campaign aims to distribute ISI-marked helmets to the public. Standardised helmets are designed to ensure safety, and the initiative will be carried out in various locations. The campaign addresses the critical issue of preventing head injuries in accidents that are often fatal," said a official.

International cybercrime racket busted

The North East Division Cyber Crime Police cracked an international cybercrime racket linked to a ₹11-crore cheating case, arresting three individuals, while efforts are underway to apprehend the Dubai-based kingpin. The arrested suspects are identified as Karan, Tarun Natani, and Dhawal Sha. They were nabbed from Allahabad and parts of Gujarat.

The gang targeted Vijay Kumar, a Bengaluru-based software engineer, who had received company shares worth ₹12 crore. Posing as officials from the Enforcement Directorate (ED), Customs, and the police, the accused implicated him in a money laundering case and threatened arrest. They "digitally detained" him for a month, coercing him into sharing ID proofs, KYC, and bank details.

They gave Vijay with nine bank account details and instructed him to transfer the money, promising its return upon completion of the process. Once the transactions were complete, the gang vanished and switched off their phones.

Acting on Vijay's complaint, the police traced the money trail and mobile call records to locations in Allahabad and Surat, Gujarat. Investigations revealed that the gang had used a jeweller's account in Surat to purchase gold worth ₹7.5 crore.

—BMB

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Students call for urgent road safety measures

Students of BMS College of Engineering fear for their safety on busy Bull Temple Road, urge BBMP, traffic police to install effective speed breakers to curb speeding on road

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Students of BMS College of Engineering have written to the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and the traffic police, urging them to install speed breakers near the college entrance on Bull Temple Road. It was noted that the absence of effective speed control measures in the area led to constant safety risks for students and faculty, as they regularly cross the road between the college's two blocks.

The students also alleged that despite repeated requests over the past months, no action has been taken beyond assurances. "Every time we approach the authorities, they promise us a solution, but nothing changes. This road is extremely busy, and vehicles speed past without any regard for pedestrians. It feels like they are waiting for an accident to happen before taking action," said a student.

Many students have complained that crossing the road is risky, especially during peak hours. "Vehicles rarely slow down, and even if we are in a group, it feels dangerous. I personally avoid crossing the road unless absolutely necessary," added another student.

Need for immediate measures

The letter also emphasised the urgency of the matter due to the continuous traffic flow on Bull Temple Road. College authorities have suggested that high-rise pedestrian crossings or scientifically designed speed breakers be installed as a long-term solution to ensure safety. "This is to bring to your kind notice that around 8,000 students are studying at our campus, and the faculty and students would be regularly commuting between the two blocks of the college situated on either side of Bull Temple Road. Since Bull Temple Road will be busy with the movement of vehicles all the time, we request that you kindly inform the authorities concerned about installing suitable road humps near the college entrance at the earliest," the letter read.

In December, the college authorities sent an official letter to BBMP, highlighting the dangers faced by nearly 8,000 students and staff who cross the road daily. "It may be recalled that recently, plastic humps were laid down near the college entrance, but the said humps created discomfort for the movement of vehicles and hence were removed immediately. We believe a more scientific and pedestrian-friendly road hump, preferably a high-rise pedestrian crossing, could better balance traffic control and safety," the letter stated.

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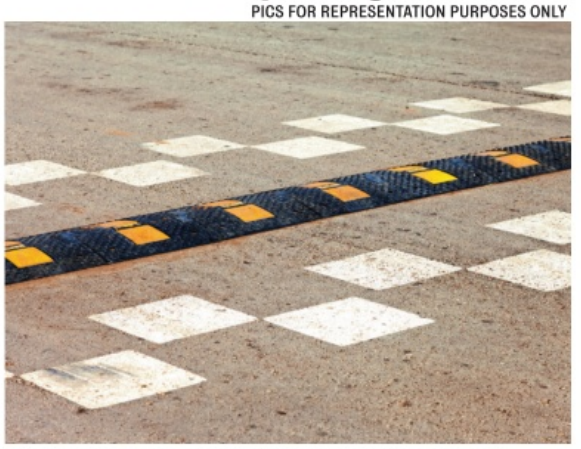

Students are requesting the installation of road humps near the college entrance

"We believe a more scientific & pedestrian-friendly road hump, preferably high-rise pedestrian crossing, could better balance traffic control & safety –College's letter to BBMP

Cries heard: Kommaghatta Lake's sewage woes are finally getting drained

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Residents of Kommaghatta, SMV Layout and surrounding areas are expecting some relief and solutions to their problems after their elected representative's visit to the 'unhygienic' Kommaghatta Lake on Saturday. Yeshwanthapura MLA ST Somashekhar, along with residents, Bangalore Development Authority, Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board, and Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike authorities, visited the lake and the idol immersion pond that have become a nuisance for the residents.

Bangalore Mirror published a story–Sludge hammer–on January 15 narrating how the residents have been suffering to cope with bad odour emanating from stagnated sewage water from the lake.

The residents narrated their plight to the MLA and appealed to him to provide the much-needed relief from the bad odour and unhygienic atmosphere around the lake. "We have been struggling a lot due to bad odour from the water body. There are many senior citizens, including us, residing here. We are worried about our health. I am happy that our MLA has directed the Panchayat officials to demolish the idol immersion pond, which has become a nuisance and a health hazard for us," said Asha Kiran, President, SMA Layout 2nd Block Lake Side Residents' Welfare Association, Kengeri. "The BDA engineer said that the lake comes under the BBMP's jurisdiction. If it is so, I want the BBMP Lakes Department to take up the maintenance of the lake," she added.

Panchayat officials have to take measures to drain out dirty water from the lake, said Umesh KS, a leader of the area. "I want the authorities to drain the dirty water as early as possible for the benefit of people residing along the lake," said Umesh. Harish Kumar, another resident, said, "I expect the authorities concerned to fix all the problems without any delay."

Meanwhile, BDA Executive Engineer Ravikumar said that he has taken measures to stop sewage from flowing into the lake. "We have taken measures, in association with the BWSSB engineers, to divert the sewage. The construction of the sewage treatment plant (STP) is in progress. I am not sure about Kommaghatta Lake coming under the BDA's jurisdiction as all the lakes were already handed over to the BBMP," Ravikumar said.

File photo of a fish kill incident at Kommaghatta Lake

BANGALORE IMPACT MIRROR

Bangalore Mirror

Bengaluru's lakes are the gems that add glitter to the city landscape. In this series, we look at how apathy of authorities has caused these beauties to slide into slime. Today we focus on Kommaghatta Lake

SLUDGE HAMMER

Untreated sewage flowing in; idol immersion pond left unclean

BM LAKES

BM's report on January 15 narrates unhygienic state of Kommaghatta Lake with untreated sewage flowing in it

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Damaged road

Shampura Main Road

Shampura Main Road remains unrepaired after excavation by a homeowner, causing significant inconvenience to residents. Despite repeated issues, authorities concerned have not taken any action to address the problem.

Pothole peril

Thirumenahalli Main Rd

The potholes on Thirumenahalli Main Road pose a severe safety hazard, creating a constant risk of accidents for commuters.

Uncleared debris

Tin Factory

Debris from the metro construction beneath the Tin Factory skywalk remains unclear even after five years. This negligence highlights the lack of accountability from the authorities and continues to be a matter of shame.

Cabbies talk of struggle to pin pay from slippery customers

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A video doing the rounds on social media revealed that customers are duping them by showing fraudulent online payment confirmations. Tech-savvy and educated passengers misuse the technology to deceive drivers and escape without paying. In recent months, drivers have reported losses of thousands of rupees, as they are shown screenshots and confirmations.

A cab driver operating in the city, shared his ordeal, stating that he has lost over 6,000 in just three months. Customers pretend to make online payments, and they even show fake payment confirmation messages. In a video, the cab driver said, "The payment never comes through. They'll tell you, 'Brother, it's done,' or blame it on a network issue. When I check later, there's no payment. If we approach the bank, they say there's a problem with the transaction apps. They'll ask us to check the UPI history, but there's nothing there either."

The modus operandi often involves customers pretending to initiate a UPI payment. Using edited screenshots, they display false payment confirmations. In some cases, they promise to pay later and disappear, leaving no trace.

Cab driver shares ordeal in video shared on social media

Another common trick involves deliberately entering incorrect UPI IDs, ensuring the payment fails while making it appear like an honest mistake. By the time the driver realises the issue, the passengers have either left or convinced the driver to let them go without paying.

Radha Krishna, a private taxi owner, explains, "These scams don't usually affect travel agencies. When a cab operates independently, drivers are more vulnerable to such fraud. In travel agencies, there's transparency in financial transactions because customers know the owner, and the owner is familiar with their clients. Issues like these are more common with smaller payments, ranging from 10 to 500."

A X user posted, "If he works for service companies like Ola and Uber, this is very unlikely to happen. Drivers can contact their support and get this sorted. if he is an independent cab driver, surely yes..."

Another social media user Nithin Agarwal suggested that they ask such customers to give missed calls. "And send the screenshot of payment on WhatsApp. (That) will help in filing cases for such fraud."

"Such scams don't just target cab drivers; they are also common in tea shops, bakeries, and juice stalls. Scammers take advantage of the rush hours," Radha Krishna added/

The financial losses suffered by victims, many of whom operate on tight budgets, are substantial.

Experts recommend that drivers verify UPI payments by checking their account balance immediately.

Cess contribution: New vehicle owners must shell out bit more

Rs 500 to be levied on 2-wheelers, Rs 1,000 on cars at time of registration

Concerns have been expressed that contribution may be unfair for two-wheeler owners

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The Karnataka Assembly has recently passed the Karnataka Motor Vehicles Taxation (Second Amendment) Bill, 2024, introducing an additional cess on new vehicle registrations.

As per the amendment, a cess of 500 will be levied on two-wheelers and 1,000 on cars at the time of registration. The funds collected from this cess will contribute to the Karnataka Motor Transport and Other Allied Workers Social Security and Welfare Fund, established to support the welfare of transport industry workers such as drivers, mechanics, and related personnel.

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy stated that this initiative is expected to generate an annual revenue of 80 to 90 crore. The collected cess will be credited to the welfare fund, which was created under the Karnataka Motor Transport and Other Allied Workers' Social Security and Welfare Act, 2024, after receiving the governor's assent in March. The welfare board overseeing the fund will allocate resources to support transport workers, similar to the Karnataka Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Fund, which is financed through a cess on construction activities.

> **"The cost of cars is 7 to 8 times higher than two-wheelers. In this case, the cess amount should have been proportional, or better yet, exempt two-wheelers**
>
> –Rajkumar Dugar, C4C

The new cess is expected to be implemented starting February. Previously, the welfare board was receiving funds amounting to 20 to 30 crore annually from a 3% levy on commercial vehicles. With the new cess in place, the revenue is projected to increase significantly, enhancing the scope of welfare initiatives for the transport sector.

Burden for two-wheeler buyers

While the government's initiative has been praised for its intent, citizens and experts have expressed concerns about its potential impact. Critics argue that the burden disproportionately falls on two-wheeler buyers, who make up 67% of vehicle owners in Bengaluru. This demographic, largely comprising middle-income individuals, is already grappling with rising costs, including water tariffs, metro fare hikes, and other price increases. Experts fear that such measures could add to inflation and raise the cost of living.

Rajkumar Dugar, founder of Citizens for Change (C4C), suggested the cess structure be reconsidered. "The cost of cars is 7 to 8 times higher than two-wheelers. In this case, the cess amount should have been proportional, or better yet, exempt two-wheelers and levy the charge solely on cars," Dugar told BM.

In response, transport department officials argued that the cess is a negligible, one-time payment that would not place a significant financial burden on buyers and that to new buyers and not on old vehicles. However, the debate continues, with experts urging a review of the cess structure to ensure fairness.

616 drunk driving cases in a week

Traffic police conducted two special enforcement drives aimed at addressing traffic violations and improving road safety across the city. These drives, carried out between January 13 and January 19, focused on drunk driving, speeding, and noise pollution caused by defective silencers and shrill horns.

During the campaign, intensified checks were conducted across 50 traffic police stations in the city. A total of 616 drunk driving cases and 693 speeding cases were registered and 61,600 vehicles were inspected. The fines collected for these violations amounted to ₹2.9 lakh.

On January 19, a separate operation specifically targeted motorists using defective silencers and shrill horns, which contribute to noise pollution. In a single day, 52 cases involving shrill horns were booked, with fines totalling ₹26,500, while 22 cases of defective silencers resulted in fines amounting to ₹11,500. **–BMB**

Man accused of deliberate fatal accident

The Thyamagondlu police have registered a case against a cab driver accused of deliberately killing his 28-year-old nephew in a car accident over a property dispute on the city outskirts on Friday.

The deceased, Ravikumar, a farmer from Channalingaiahnapalya, was riding his bike to deliver milk when a speeding car hit him. Severely injured, Ravikumar was initially taken to a private hospital and later shifted to Tumakuru District Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries.

In her complaint to the police, Chaitra, Ravikumar's sister, alleged that a villager witnessed the incident and claimed Ravikumar was deliberately knocked down by a car driven by their uncle, Suresh, who fled the scene immediately after the collision.

Chaitra further revealed that Suresh frequently quarreled with her father and brother over a 19-gunta ancestral property. The disputes had escalated recently, with Suresh allegedly issuing threats to Ravikumar.

–BMB

Monitoring sloth bears in state with GPS collars

Radio Collaring Project aims to study sloth bears, reduce human-bear conflicts; 10 are being tracked so far

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As sloth bears increasingly venture into human-dominated areas due to shrinking habitats, conflicts between humans and these animals are on the rise. To address this issue, Wildlife SOS had initiated the 'Sloth Bear Radio Collaring Project' in Karnataka, aiming to study sloth bear movements, population distribution, and factors contributing to human-bear conflicts.

The project involves attaching GPS collars on sloth bears to monitor their movements and understand their habitat preferences. The data collected will help researchers identify patterns of conflict and develop solutions to promote peaceful coexistence between humans and sloth bears. "By documenting the role of sloth bears in the terrestrial forest ecosystem of Karnataka, we would be in a better position to understand their significance to biodiversity conservation," said Dr Arun A Sha, Director-Research & Veterinary Operations, Wildlife SOS.

File photo of a baby bear playing with its mother at Daroji Sloth Bear Sanctuary

The process

The collaring process is carried out with the support of the forest department. These bears are safely tranquillised using barrel traps, fitted with GPS collars, and monitored before being released back into the wild at the site of capture. The GPS collars weigh around 700 grams, accounting for only 10% of the bear's body weight. These collars use GPS and VHF (Very High Frequency) technology to transmit real-time data on the bear's location and activities.

So far, ten sloth bears have been successfully collared under the project, with more collaring operations planned in the coming months. "We are tracking 10 bears—five in Daroji Sloth Bear Sanctuary and five in Gudekote Sloth Bear Sanctuary. Two teams monitor the bears, analysing their movements and dietary habits. For example, in Gudekote, sloth bears travel up to 18 km to fruit orchards at night and return to betel nut farms in the morning, often resulting in human-bear encounters," said Swaminathan S, Field Biologist at Wildlife SOS. However, challenges remain. "Sloth bears are aggressive and often damage the collars by rubbing or biting them, which disrupts the signal. Locating the bears again and fitting new collars is a tough task. Despite these hurdles, we are gathering valuable data," he added.

> **By gathering crucial data, we aim to develop effective strategies to mitigate conflicts & ensure safety of wildlife & human communities**
>
> –Kartick Satyanarayan, Co-founder & CEO of Wildlife SOS

The data collected so far will be published in the next few months, offering deeper insights into the behaviour of sloth bears and ways to minimise human-bear conflicts.

Study's value to foster coexistence

The project also aims to study how habitat degradation drives sloth bears to seek food in agricultural fields, such as groundnut farms, and areas with fruit orchards. These movements sometimes lead to attacks on humans, especially when bears wander into places where people are working.

"The radio-collaring project, coupled with a survey of local attitudes towards wildlife, holds great promise for fostering coexistence between humans and sloth bears. By gathering crucial data, we aim to develop effective strategies to mitigate conflicts and ensure the safety of both wildlife and human communities," said Kartick Satyanarayan, Co-founder and CEO of Wildlife SOS.

Arjuna's memorial is ready: Khandre

Minister for Forest, Ecology and Environment Eshwar B Khandre has announced that the memorial for Dasara elephant Arjuna is ready and will be inaugurated in the first week of February. The memorial was earlier scheduled to be completed on December 4, on the first death anniversary of Arjuna. However, it was delayed due to technical reasons. Another memorial has also been constructed at Balle elephant camp in the Nagarahole forest range (Arjuna's camp). The memorial will be open for public viewing by the end of February or the first week of March. The 64-year-old Arjuna died in December 2023 following injuries sustained during an elephant capture operation conducted by the Karnataka Forest Department. **–BMB**

KFD to probe Kantara: Ch1 shooting area

Action will be taken against the crew of 'Kantara: Chapter 1,' which is currently shooting in Gavibetta and surrounding areas of Herur village, Hassan, if they violate the set conditions, said Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre. Notably, Hombale Films was given conditional permission to shoot the film in and around Gavibetta. However, it has been alleged that Kantara's team is using explosives during the shoot, which is disturbing wildlife in the area. "As soon as I came to know about it, I instructed the officials to visit the spot and carry out an inspection. If the conditions set by the Deputy Conservator of Forests, Hassan, have been violated and wildlife has sustained any damage, the shooting would be stopped immediately," he said. **–BMB**

BM Trippin' Tales

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Ready for smooth ride to Ooty? New bypass road to open soon

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Travelling to Ooty via Mettupalayam is going to get easier as a new road that bypasses Coonoor town and connects directly to Ooty is scheduled to open next month. It is reported that the state highways department has completed 90% of the construction work.

Ooty is one of the popular hill stations flocked to by Bengalureans. While many prefer the Bandipur-Ooty route as it is a shorter one and passes through forests, there are a few who take the route via Mettupalayam as the former route is blocked during the night.

According to a Times of India report, the new 20 km dual-carriageway road begins at Katteri junction, located 3 km before Coonoor, and passes through Selas, Ketti Palada, and Gandhipet villages. It ends near the Lawrence School junction on the main Coimbatore-Ooty highway, approximately 4 km from Ooty.

Officials highlighted that many tourists miss out on attractions due to traffic congestion. 'Most tourists plan weekend getaways, but by Friday afternoon, the Coonoor-Ooty stretch experiences heavy traffic, disrupting plans. An alternate route will ease traffic.' According to a highways official, heavy traffic, often exceeding 20,000 vehicles from Mettupalayam, is observed daily on the Coonoor-Aruvankadu path, particularly during weekends and summer holidays; this alternative route is expected to alleviate the frequent congestion along the path. During peak hours, motorists can spend up to an hour travelling from Coonoor to Ooty due to congestion, especially during landslides. The new route can reduce travel time by 20 minutes on such days.

'New route can reduce travel time by 20 minutes during congestion'

Additionally, the new route is anticipated to benefit Gudalur-bound truckers heading to border towns in Kerala and Karnataka. The Tamil Nadu highways department allocated an estimated budget of 46 crore for this project, which included bridging a small segment of a panchayat road to ensure continuous travel to Ooty. Single-lane roads were expanded to two-lane roads, and enhancements were made to stormwater drains, 138 culverts, and small bridges to prevent flooding during rainy seasons. Once opened to the public, the Nilgiris police can utilise the new road exclusively for vehicles entering Ooty, allowing the regular Aruvankadu route to serve as the exit pathway, as per the highway official's statement.

Local residents of Nilgiris, however, emphasise the need for proper road maintenance by the government to maintain efficient traffic flow. Residents say that the roads end up having potholes after just three or four days of continuous rain. Fixing the existing roads should be a priority.

KSPCB gets new faceless portal

Karnatak Forest Minister launched a faceless online system for the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB). This comprehensive and simple software has been developed to provide consent and authorisations issued by the Board under one roof in a faceless manner. The service has been developed by a committee of officials from the KFD, Karnataka State Remote Sensing Applications Centre (KSRSAC), DPAR (e-Governance), and KSPCB under the chairmanship of Debabrata Das, Director, International Institute of Information Technology-IIITB, Bengaluru. This portal will enable the speedy disposal of applications transparently received by the Board. **–BMB**

‘State should never stifle or smother rights of poor’

HC sets aside order that reduced higher education aid for children of construction workers

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Notification in 2023 reduced amount given to workers’ kids educational assistance to Rs 10,000

The Karnataka High Court nullified a 2023 state government notification that reduced educational aid for registered construction workers’ children pursuing higher education.

Justice M Nagaprasanna stated, “The state should never stifle or smother the rights of the poor. There is no reason whatsoever found in any of the justification projected by the State to do so. The State Government must remember it should take all steps towards educating women, as it is said, educating a man is educating an individual; educating a woman, is educating a generation.”

The court instructed the state government and welfare board to distribute educational assistance for applications received during 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 academic years until studies completion. The court noted, “The Board shall consider the applications of similarly situated applicants, bearing in mind the observations made in the course of the order and not drive every person to knock at the doors of this Court seeking identical relief, as the State can bear the brunt of litigation, but not the poor citizen.”

The case involved petitions by Amritha M and Ankitha H, construction workers’ daughters pursuing MBA and Law studies. Previously, they received Rs 35,000 per semester as educational assistance. However, a notification dated October 30, 2023, reduced this amount to Rs 10,000, compared to earlier rates of Rs 30,000 and Rs 35,000 for higher education. During proceedings, an interim order ensured petitioners received assistance per previous rates. Their counsel argued against the new notification’s validity, highlighting its significant reduction in assistance for registered workers and their children.

The petition revealed the Board’s welfare funds totalled Rs 6,700 crore, invested in fixed deposits contrary to Supreme Court directives. Concerns were also raised about excessive administrative expenditure and insufficient welfare scheme spending.

The Board’s counsel clarified that administrative expenses supported various assistance programmes for registered workers and their families. Although funds were previously used for MGNREGA and Indira Canteen, these allocations have ceased, with current spending focused on construction workers’ welfare.

> **“Educational assistance to the poor children should only increase and not decrease to such abysmal levels**
>
> –High Court observation

The court observed the notification’s drastic changes, stating, “Educational assistance to the poor children should only increase and not decrease to such abysmal levels. No reasons are forthcoming in the Notification as to why the notification puts the clock back to a 2011 scale. The lives of children of construction workers should be made good in a progressive manner and not in a regressive manner, as is done in the case at hand.”

The court examined how the Rs 6,700 crore cess collection benefits construction workers, noting discrepancies between Board expenditure reports and CAG findings. The court highlighted, “The expenditure projected by the Board has several heads which do not touch upon the welfare of the construction workers to whom the amount in deposit or its interest has to be necessarily spent.”

The judgement noted the Board’s failure to apply for income tax exemption, resulting in a Rs 3,548 crore tax liability. It criticised the fixed deposit investment of Rs 6,700 crore. The court ordered immediate cessation of fund misuse and directed CAG to complete the Board’s audit within three months.

HC: Dismissal sole penalty for bribery

The Karnataka High Court emphasised that dismissal or removal from service is the sole penalty for proven bribery misconduct. The Court addressed a Writ Petition against the Karnataka State Administrative Tribunal’s (KSAT) decision, which had modified a dismissal penalty to compulsory retirement in a case involving acceptance of Rs 20,000 as bribe.

The Division Bench, consisting of Justice SG Pandit and Justice Ramachandra D Huddar, noted that the tribunal erred significantly in altering the punishment. They cited Supreme Court precedents stating that dismissal or removal is the only appropriate punishment for proven bribery cases, unless the bribery charge itself is disproven. The Bench clarified that judicial intervention in punishment matters is warranted only when the penalty is disproportionate or shocks the conscience of the Court.

Case background

The Respondent, a Second Division Assistant in the Education Department, whilst serving as Block Education Officer, faced allegations of demanding Rs 25,000 to correct pre-university marks card errors. A trap was set, leading to his arrest accepting Rs 20,000. This resulted in both departmental inquiry and criminal charges under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

Following the Karnataka Lokayukta’s investigation and Upa Lokayukta’s recommendation, the State Government dismissed the Respondent under Rule 8(iii) of the Karnataka Civil Services Rules, 1957. The Tribunal’s subsequent modification of this dismissal to compulsory retirement led to the State’s High Court appeal.

Court’s analysis

The High Court determined the Tribunal’s modification was unjustified. It distinguished between criminal and departmental proceedings, noting their different evidence standards. The Court emphasised its limited role under Article 226, stating it wouldn’t function as an appellate authority or reassess evidence. It would only verify the existence of evidence supporting the charge.

The Court concluded that without finding the punishment disproportionate or shocking to conscience, the Tribunal lacked authority to modify the penalty. Subsequently, the High Court allowed the petition and nullified the Tribunal’s order.

— BMB

Nod to divert Sharavathy Valley land for project causes wildlife worry

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The controversial Sharavathy pumped-storage project has received first-level approval for diversion of forest land from the Karnataka Forest Department (KFD). The project has been recommended by the deputy conservator of forests of all three divisions – Shivamogga Wildlife, Sagar, and Honnavar – of its proposed location.

The DCFs, in their site inspection reports, highlighted negative impacts of the project on the fragile ecosystem of Western Ghats, but go on to suggest the project should be recommended as it aims to use natural resources available in the state.

“...The project also does not intend to create new reservoirs or dams and utilises only existing dams. Given the points highlighted in the site inspection report, and the likely positive and negative impacts of the proposed project on the sanctuary, the proposal is being forwarded for consideration with an in-principle recommendation to decide on a higher level subject to fulfillment of necessary conditions,” said the recommendation letters.

Wildlife conservationists say the project would be disastrous for the wildlife in the region. It would cause irreplaceable damage to the Sharavathy Valley, an already fragmented landscape due to the construction of dams, reservoirs, hydroelectric projects, encroachment, linear projects, etc. “Apart from destroying the habitat of endemic species such as Lion-Tailed Macaques, it will also damage the last remaining habitats of Myristica Swamps, a rare and critical ecosystem in the region. I hope that the state Forest Minister and State Board for Wildlife disapprove of this ecologically disastrous project,” said Giridhar Kulkarni, a conservationist.

They highlight that as per the population estimation conducted in 2022-23, the sanctuary is home to 730 Lion-Tailed Macaques.

The project has a total land requirement of 142.763 hectares, of which 54.155 hectares is in the forest area of Sharavathi Valley LTM Wildlife Sanctuary and its eco-sensitive zone in Shivamogga Wildlife Division (14.582 hectares), Sagar Territorial Division (39.719 hectares) and Honnavar Territorial Division (88.462 hectares). “The project would also require the removal of nearly 15,000 trees, which will make the area susceptible to landslides. It will also impact agricultural fields in the Honnavar division, apart from impacting the fishing community. It is an unscientific project taken up due to the big money involved. It should not be approved,” said Subramanya S, a local wildlife activist.

Clearance given: KFD

According to SK Malkhede, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (wildlife) and Chief Wildlife Warden of Karnataka, the project has received KFD’s wildlife clearance and will be tabled before the state board of wildlife soon for the final clearance.

“Since the project required diversion of forest land, the final approval has to be from the Central government,” said Malkhede.

No differences with anyone in party, says DK Shivakumar

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Monday said that he has no differences with anyone in the party and appealed to the media not to drag him into any controversy.

Shivakumar, who is also Congress state president, said his sole responsibility is to "save" the party and government. "My only responsibility is to save the party and keep the government stable. I don't have any responsibilities other than this. I don't have differences with anyone. Please don't drag my name unnecessarily into everything," he said, while speaking to reporters here.

The statement comes in the midst of a demand by a section of ministers and MLAs who wanted a full-time Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president. Karnataka Public Works Minister Satish Jarkiholi recently raised this demand, saying that ministers cannot do justice to the important post of building the party.

Shivakumar said he has been diligently doing his duty of protecting the interests of the party and the party workers. "It is between the party, the high command and me. Don't whip up fake controversies within the party by reporting that there is dissidence in the party," Shivakumar told reporters here.

Asked if there was no internal rift in the Congress party, he said, "There is no rift in the party. I don't have differences with anyone in the party personally. I am the president of the Congress Karnataka unit and I treat everyone in the party equally. It is my duty to take everyone along." **PTI**

Academics or sports? He went where his passion took him

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

gave me a taste of what it felt like to compete at a high level."

Initially, Gowtham's first coach, Mahadesh, played a pivotal role in his development, encouraging him to continue pursuing Kho-Kho. "I remember Mahadesh sir urging me to stay focused and keep playing. We qualified for the state-level competition in the fifth standard, and that's when I realised that Kho-Kho could be more than just a school sport," he said.

As he progressed, Gowtham was picked up for training by the Young Pioneers Sports Club (YPSC) in Vijayanagar, where he trained under coach Kumar. "Kumar sir always believed in me. He encouraged me, saying there was a future in Kho-Kho, and that I could even play while continuing my education. That support meant the world to me," Gowtham recalls.

His hard work paid off in 2012 when he won a gold medal in the Sub-Junior Nationals in Bengaluru. Over the years, Gowtham went on to represent Karnataka in junior and senior competitions, captaining the state team on multiple occasions.

"I've had the privilege of representing Karnataka in 27 state and national-level competitions, and each time, I've given my best for my team," he added.

Gowtham's achievements didn't stop there. His exceptional performance at the Senior Nationals led to his selection for the Ultimate Kho-Kho League, where he competed in two seasons. It was his consistent success at the national level that earned him a spot in the Indian Kho-Kho World Cup squad. "This was the first time the Kho-Kho World Cup was being held, and I was thrilled to be part of the team," he said, speaking about his experiences training and competing.

> **"Many people think that only those from poor backgrounds play Kho-Kho, but I want to change that perception. I hope to inspire others and show them that hard work and dedication can lead to success** —Gowtham MK

Despite the physical and mental demands of the sport, Gowtham's determination never wavered. His daily training sessions, lasting from 5:30 am to 8:30 am and 5:30 pm to 9:30 pm, have been rigorous.

"We've been training in Delhi for world cup preparation, focussing on strengthening and improving our skills. We also maintain a strict diet to stay in top shape for the competition," he explained.

Gowtham's journey wasn't without its financial struggles. "Growing up, my family was going through tough times. We didn't have the money to buy equipment or pay for training. My father always wanted me to focus on my studies and not pursue sports. But when he saw my performance, and after Coach Kumar convinced him, he began to support me," he recalled.

Today, Gowtham has not only earned the respect of his family but has also become a role model for aspiring athletes.

"Many people think that only those from poor backgrounds play Kho-Kho, but I want to change that perception. I hope to inspire others and show them that hard work and dedication can lead to success, regardless of where you come from," he said.

Rohit KC, Director of YPSC, said, "Our club in Vijayanagar has been around since 1979, and we've produced many sportspersons who have represented the country. Gowtham's achievement in the World Cup was outstanding, and he was named the 'Man of the Match' in the semi-finals against South Africa. We are extremely proud of him," he said.

Mysuru girl stars in Women's team

B. Chaithra, hailing from a farming family in Kuruburu Village, T Narasipura taluk, Mysuru district, played a pivotal role in the triumph of the Indian women's Kho-Kho team at the recent World Cup.

Manjunath, a mathematics teacher at her school, shared his thoughts, saying, "Although I taught Mathematics, I always encouraged my students to explore physical education as well. We recognised Chaitra's exceptional athleticism, discipline, and dedication early on. She even earned the 'Player of the Match' title. She started playing Kho-Kho in the fourth standard and has been an essential part of the Indian team's victory.

Coming from an agricultural family, with her mother working as a tailor, Chaitra received strong support from her family in her journey."

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I, Shafiqur Rahaman S/O Fazlur Rahman #118/6 Hennur Blr-84 have changed my name to Shafiqur Rahaman T F R for all purposes.

I, Sameena Banu S/o Late Tarakanambi Khader Abdul Rahman R/o 2B, 3rd Main, HBR Layout, Banaswadi Kalyanagar Post B'lore 560043 Declare that name of my father has been wrongly entered as Abdul Rehman in my passport. Also Declare that name of my mother has been wrongly entered as Sajeeda Banu in my passport. The Actual name of my mother is Sajida Banu

I, SHOBHAVATHAMMA MADHUSUDHANA D/o Nagabhushana Setty.G, and R/at No.78, 6th Cross, Near Telephone Exchange, Basaveshwara Layout, Bangalore- 560040 have changed my name to SHOBHA MADHUSUDHANA vide affidavit dated: 16/1/2025 before Notary R.Basavaraja Bangalore.

I Resmi Sebastian W/o Prakasha N R/o # 212, Arya Mansion Apartment 2nd Floor, Near Patelamma Temple, Carana Bank Layout,Vidyaran-yapura, Bangaluru 560097 have changed my name to Resmi Prakash for all purposes.

I, Nithin S/O, Gopinath Nayak R/o H No 54 Nehru Road Near Choleshwar Temple Bhatkal Uttara Kannada 581320 have changed my name to Nithin Gopinath Nayak for all purposes.

I, Preksha Kumari Nolkha D/o Raviprakash Nolkha R/o 208, B Block, Mars Classic Apts, 8th Cross, 1st Main, Rajarajeshwari Nagar,B'lore-560098 have changed my name to Preksha Nolkha.

I, Ningappa Mallappa S/O, Mallappa R/o Jogimatti Road, Sunnadagumm Near, 6th Cross, Chitradurga 577501 have changed my name to Ningappa for all purposes.

I, Ashraf Ali Shahul, R/at No.13/1, 2nd Main, 1st Cross, Vinobha Nagar, K.G Halli, Bangalore-560045 have changed my name to Ashraf Ali, For All Purposes.

I Shanthalakshmi D/O, Krishna C R/o No 15 Pwd Main Road Opp Yellow Mart Akasknagar B.narayanapura Bengaluru-560016 have changed my name to Shanthalakshmi K.

I Lubna Gazal D/o M M Mohammed Habeeb R/o 992,19th main, BTM, Bengaluru, Shall Be Known as Lubna Gazal M Habeeb for all Purpose.

HEALTH TIP: Amenorrhea (no menstruation) or irregular periods can lead to a very low level of estrogen, resulting in fragile bones

Building a fitness routine helps one with stress relief and enhances focus

GEN TECH

Mental health talks for Indian moms with their tech-savvy teens

The social media age is rapidly advancing, and today's generation acing the digital game with ease. They are smart, tech-savvy, and quick to adapt, with an impressive ability to grasp new concepts. However, it's important for them to understand where to draw the line. They need guidance on what is acceptable and what is not.

While technology has provided many benefits, it has also introduced unique challenges, especially with regards to mental health. Being a parent in today's digital age can feel like navigating a highly intense digital minefield, (or maybe running in a Minecraft challenge)! As parents, it's essential to understand how to effectively navigate mental health conversations with tech-savvy teens and support them in managing their well-being in a hyper-connected world.

Stay Updated

As a parent, understanding the digital space is very important. Teens today are immersed in a world where their lives are often shared online, and digital interactions can significantly impact their mental health. From the pressures of social media to cyberbullying these digital experiences can amplify stress, anxiety, and self-esteem issues.

What You Can Do: Stay informed about the platforms your teen is using. Familiarise yourself with apps like Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and gaming platforms. Understanding how these platforms function, the challenges they present, and their potential impact on mental health.

Having Open Conversation Helps

Teens are more likely to open up about their feelings when they feel supported and understood, rather than judged. Conversations about mental health should be non-judgmental and compassionate, creating a space where teens feel safe to share their thoughts and emotions without fear of being punished or mocked. Mental health should be treated with the same importance as physical health. By discussing mental health openly, you remove the stigma that surrounds it, which can make it easier for teens to seek help when they need it.

What You Can Do: Expressing your own feelings or talking about stress and coping strategies can show your teen that it's okay to be vulnerable. Share resources, such as books, websites, or even podcasts, that focus on mental health to help them feel empowered in discussing their struggles.

What The Expert Says?

Dr Neerja Aggarwal, Co-founder & CEO, of Emoneeds guides Indian parents as to how this can be effectively done:

Approach It With Curiosity, Not Criticism

The moment you sound critical of their choices, your teen will simply shut down, and that would be the end of the conversation. While your concerns about increasing screen time or social media influences are valid, you need to join the teens and be part of their world. Having trust in the discernment of teens, asking open & fun questions about their social media browsing, would create more opportunities for deeper conversations. Perhaps try asking "what's a cool new meme or reel you saw recently?" or "does this online stuff ever get exhausting/overwhelming?"

Don't Be Quick To Jump In And Rescue!

As parents, it's our basic instinct to protect our babies. But your teen is not a baby and is experiencing the world through their own eyes. Hold your horses and don't be quick to offer advice when your teen opens up to you about this pressure. Acknowledge that the online world can get just as intense and real as the real world. And offer genuine support!

Summon Technology As An Ally!

Whether it is apps on mindfulness or mental health or smart and uplifting podcasts or playlists, technology can be a great assistant! In fact, make it a family bonding time – to go through this selective content together or well, to even do a digital detox together!

Create Smaller Windows For Conversations!

Create routines for a no-phone zone and time to spend as family. Maybe, not having phones on the dinner table or dedicating specific hours where, as a family you do a digital detox, read and discuss books etc or just talk uninterrupted, would certainly help.

Lastly, Celebrate!

Positive reinforcements are necessary to bring any behavioural change in your kids. Whether your kid has successfully completed a digital detox or has gained 1000 more followers on Instagram, celebrate every win.

—Kayal Arivalan, Femina

MIRRORLIGHTS

Pregnant woman's grey matter shrinks by 5 pc, partly recovers postpartum: Study

Grey matter volume shrinks by about five per cent during pregnancy, followed by a partial recovery in the postpartum period, a study has found.

The changes in grey matter were observed in 94 per cent of the brain, particularly prominent in the default mode network, which is known to help with social cognition. The findings are published in the journal Nature Communications.

Grey matter, which makes up the outermost layer and interior parts of the brain, helps with processing and interpreting information, thereby allowing one to think, learn and remember.

Researchers, led by those from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain, also found that a greater recovery of grey matter was related to a better mother-infant bond.

The team analysed MRI brain scans of nearly 180 first-time pregnant women to study the structural changes occurring during the second and third trimester and the first six months postpartum. Scans taken prior to conceiving served as 'baseline'.

"We unveil a U-shaped trajectory in grey matter volume, which dips in

late pregnancy and partially recovers during postpartum," the authors wrote.

"The U-shaped trajectory of GM volume affected numerous regions across the brain's cortex, encompassing 94 per cent of its surface. Particularly striking changes were observed in higher-order cognitive networks such as the default mode and frontoparietal networks," they wrote. The study also showed that the pregnancy-linked brain changes were related with fluctuating levels of two estrogens -- 'estriol-3-sulfate' and 'estrone-sulfate'. Estrogens are hormones important for sexual development and reproduction in women, and known to rise markedly during pregnancy before returning to basic levels after delivery.

Further, the researchers observed that a higher increase and subsequent decrease in estrogen levels is associated with a greater decrease and subsequent recovery of brain gray matter volume.

The study group also included 'non-gestational mothers' -- women whose partners underwent pregnancy -- and thus, helped determine that the brain changes are largely linked to the biological process of pregnancy, rather than to the experience of becoming a mother, the researchers said.

A study, published in September 2024 in the journal Nature Neuroscience, that tracked neuroanatomical changes before, during and after pregnancy in a 38-year old healthy woman, had found widespread decreases in grey matter which were significantly correlated with rising levels of estradiol (an estrogen).

While some of the brain changes were found to persist up to two years post-pregnancy, others returned to levels similar to those when the woman was two months pregnant.

— PTI

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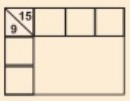
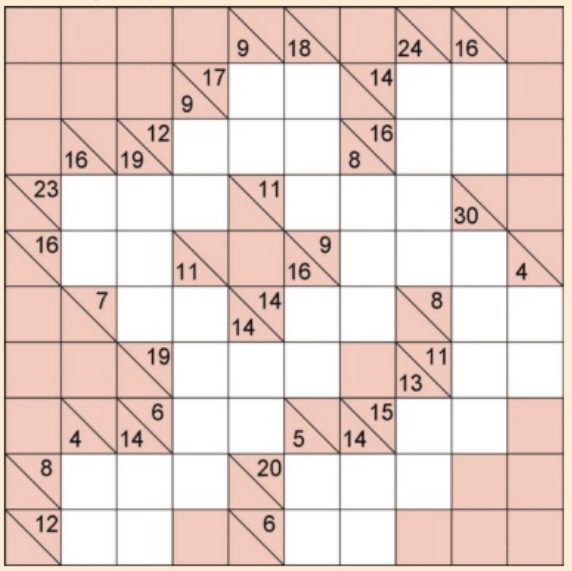
Kakuro

The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas



for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.

Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



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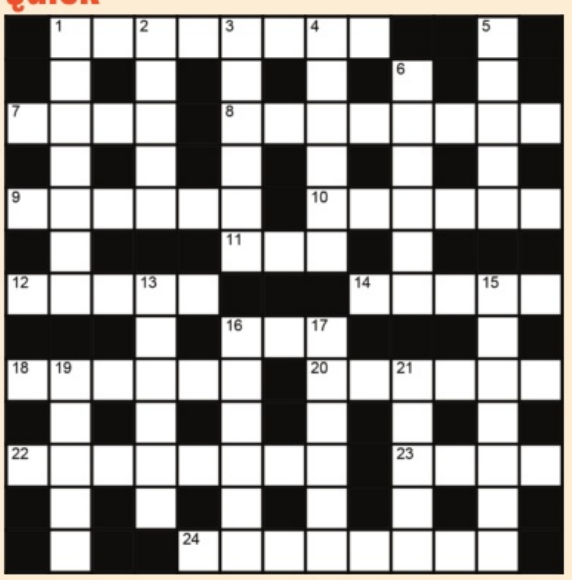


ACROSS

1 A young rooster (8)
7 Rise or ascend (2,2)
8 India's billiards maestro ___ Joshi (8)
9 Italy's football league (5,1)
10 French tower ? (6)
11 Physics unit (3)
12 One of the two equal sections of a cone (5)
14 Thomas ____ / English poet believed to be lover of Anne Boleyn? (5)
16 Last month of the year in short (3)
18 Weaken; hinder (6)
20 Scots girl? (6)
22 Mr. Putin of Russia (8)
23 Border (4)
24 Held in high regard (8)

DOWN

1 Acute intestinal infection (7)
2 Romantic Isle off Naples (5)
3 Make beloved (6)
4 Craved, coveted or lusted for (6)
5 Marie ___ / Nobel chemist? (5)
6 Supercilious (6)
13 Soviet newspaper (6)
15 Suddenly understood (7)
16 Serious stage fare (6)
17 Author Arthur C ___ (6)
19 Beach near Udupi (5)
21 Vapour (5)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: W EQUALS O

FZYVZHOMIR OMF OXIE SQ ZW YVXHO ZOV FZXYF, ZWW WLZVI UXI LWYRVZF ZOV LKWNVYF XZ OMF LVVZ .

Linemaro

Are you a dementor? Because you take my breath away

Mindchow

A conscience is like a baby. It has to go to sleep before you can

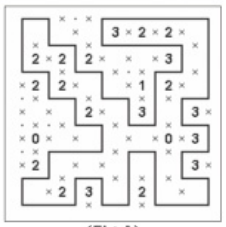
Joke of the day

What do you call a dinosaur that only eats the most delicious food? Connoisaur

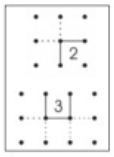
Loop

Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.



(Fig A)



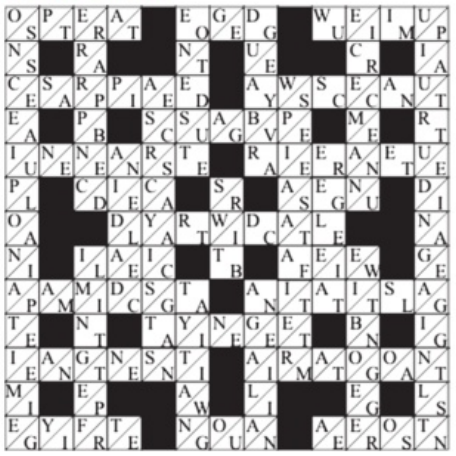
(Fig B) Not Allowed

How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)

Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8				
9		U		

ACROSS

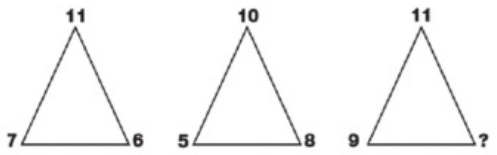
1 A cusp; 6 Eliot;
7 Dr Ree; 8 Ena me;
9 Ur Lar

DOWN

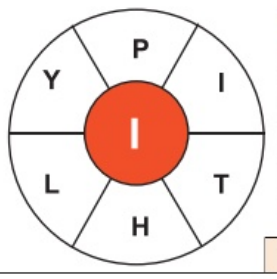
1 Reset; 2 On cur;
3 A err I; 4 A mule;
5 Paled

Mensapuzzle

Which number replaces the question mark and completes the puzzle?



Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

03 Average; 04 Good; 05 Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

			1		9			
		6			7	3	2	
7		9			3	6		
	5	8						1
	9	7				8	6	
2						5	7	
		4	9			7		6
	8	2	7			1		
			6		4			

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 16

3 4 4 5

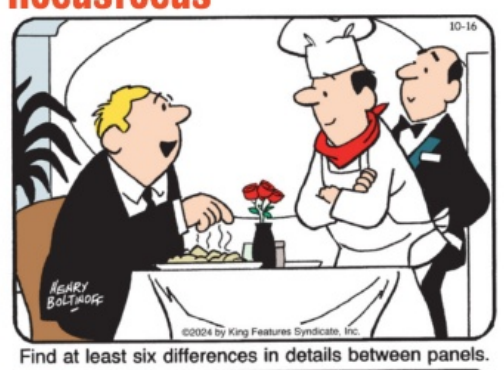
Medium = 10

5 4 4 2

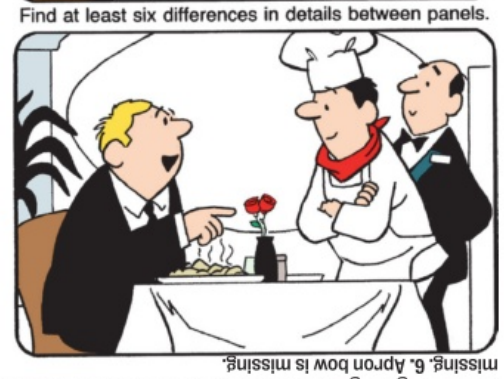
Hard = 69

2 8 8 7

Hocusfocus



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



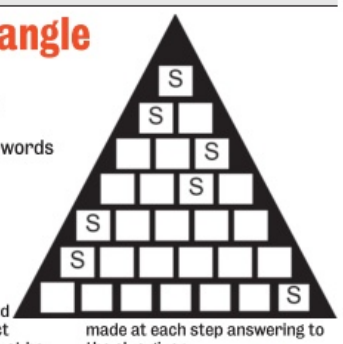
Differences: 1. Flower is missing. 2. Finger is different. 3. Name tag is higher. 4. Chef has more hair. 5. Plant leaf is missing. 6. Apron bow is missing.

Riddler

How do you get from cold to warm in four steps, changing only one letter at a time?

Alpha triangle

1 Curved letter
2 Thus
3 Goddess of dawn
4 Ascended
5 Used four-letter words
6 Not so quick
7 Blossoms



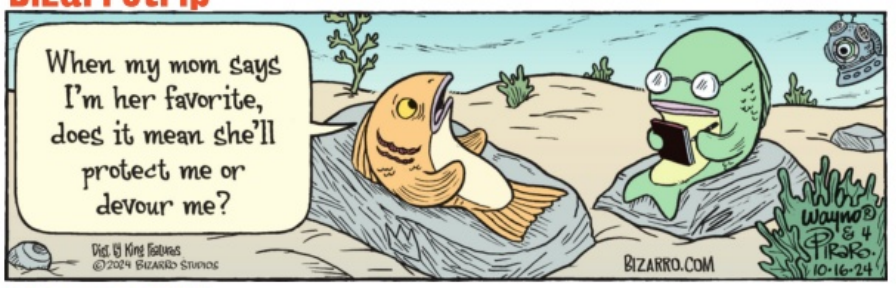
Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Popeye

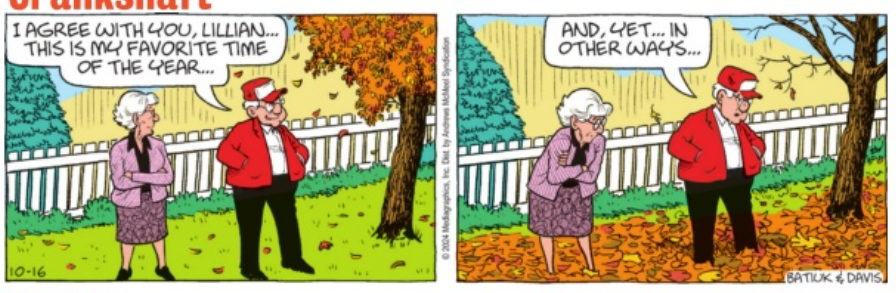
Bizarrotrip



Diamond Lil

Hart of the city

Crankshaft



Mutts

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today, you may feel a bit down. It's important to keep your mind calm and think carefully before taking any action. You might need to travel to recover your money, and there's a risk of losing it if you're not cautious. Avoid adventurous trips today. Students should focus on deep studying to achieve success.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
You may consider renovating your home today and might purchase some artwork or creative items that will boost your social status. Investing in property or assets could be on your mind. Romantic moments with your spouse will strengthen your emotional bond. Singles could meet a potential soulmate, and couples might make important decisions about marriage.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
You may feel happy today. Any blocked finances could be recovered, improving liquidity for your business. Job holders might receive incentives, improving your financial health. Job seekers could find opportunities through friends or family members' referrals. Students might benefit from help with their studies. But chronic health issues in your family might not be resolved.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
Today is significant for your domestic life. You may be happy and may spend time with your children. You could hear good news related to their education. You may buy creative items for your home or office to maintain your social standing. You are advised to be cautious while purchasing household items or jewellery.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Today, impatience could affect your work, leading to minor mistakes and incomplete tasks. It's best to delay investments in fixed assets for now. However, with guidance from elders, you may overcome challenges. In the evening, you might regain focus and dedication to your work.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
With blessings of the moon, you will feel energised and focused today. Your hard work will likely pay off with success. Your colleagues may offer support. A short work-related trip could be in the cards. You may receive good news from a sibling. You could also be planning home or office renovations, putting your creativity to the test.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Today, you may gain control over unnecessary spending, which could help boost your savings. Your creativity will shine, whether at work or home, elevating your social status. Lovebirds might find support from their families and friends for their marriage plans.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
Today, chaotic situations will come under control, bringing peace of mind. You may achieve a better balance between spending and saving, leading to increased savings. It is best you avoid excessive travel or overworking, as it could affect your health. Students may start planning for higher education, and lovebirds will enjoy happy moments together.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
You might face health issues today, which could cause impatience. It's important to manage your temper. It is advised that you do not spend money on unnecessary items as it could harm your savings. Lovebirds should avoid arguing over trivial matters to prevent breaking up.

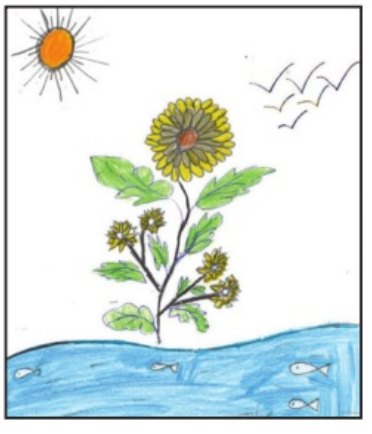
Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Today is good. You may meet someone influential who can assist in your professional progress. This connection will strengthen your network. You might also plan to implement new ideas in your work or business and invest more capital, leading to financial growth in the future. Family gatherings and social events will keep you busy in domestic life.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
It is a good day. Your mother's health will likely improve today. At work, you'll enjoy success and recognition for your hard work. Your social standing will rise, though overworking could leave you feeling tired. Due to work pressure, you may end up missing a family event.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Today, you will feel content with your work. A short work-related trip could be on your schedule. You might also visit a religious place to find inner peace. Your mentors will guide you, providing clarity about your goals and direction.

KIDZONE

Likhith Raj, 11 Years, Florence High School



Suraj Sinde, 14 Years, Adarsha School

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

RIDDLER
cold; cord; word; worm; warm
cold; cord; word; ward; warm
cold; card; ward; cord; word; warm (More ways can be possible)

QUOTE UNCODE
Stretching his hand up to reach the stars, too often man forgets the flowers at his feet.

FAST FIVE

S	C	A	U	P
T	O	I	L	E
E	N	E	M	A
E	R	R	E	D
R	U	R	A	L

SOLVE IN 1M
$=[1+5^2-3]^2$
$=(2)^2=4$

STRIKE OUT

E	Y	R	E		N	O	N		E	R	S	T
M		E								E	S
N		A		I						A	
I	N	G	E	S	T		A	R	A	G	O	N
T		N		T	I	N	G	E		N		I
A	M	I	D	S	T		A	T	T	I	L	A
N		L	E	I		B		F	E	W		G
O		L	Y	R	I	C	A	L				A
P		D	I	A		S		S	E	N		D
U	N	E	A	S	E		A	E	R	A	T	E
E		P		S	U	A	V	E		M		T
C	A	P	P	E	D		A	S	C	E	N	T
N		A		N		U				C		I
E		R										C

QUICK

													E	
													P	
													A	
													R	
													A	
													D	
													E	
													D	
													G	
													E	
													R	
													F	
													R	
													F	

MENSA PUZZLE
6. In each triangle, add together the lower two digits and subtract 2 for the left hand triangle, 3 for the middle and 4 for the right hand triangle, putting the result at the apex of the triangle.

BULL'S EYE
hilt, pith, PITHILY, pithy, pithy

SUDOKU

5	2	3	1	6	9	4	8	7
8	1	6	5	4	7	3	2	9
7	4	9	8	2	3	6	1	5
3	5	8	2	7	6	9	4	1
4	9	7	3	5	1	8	6	2
2	6	1	4	9	8	5	7	3
1	3	4	9	8	2	7	5	6
6	8	2	7	3	5	1	9	4
9	7	5	6	1	4	2	3	8

ALPHA TRIANGLE
S, So, EOs, Rose, Swore, Slower, Flowers.

GO FIGURE
Easy
$5+3+4+4=16$
Medium
$5+4-4\times2=10$
Hard
$8\times8+7-2=69$

LOOP

KAKURO

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Stop this now: Kareena

Kareena Kapoor and her family have been giving regular health updates about Saif Ali Khan since he was attacked at their home on January 16. Earlier, the actress had asked for privacy in a statement, requesting space for the family to cope with the difficult situation.Despite the request for privacy, paparazzi and media have been frequently visiting their home, Satguru Sharan, and Lilavati Hospital to capture moments of the family. One particular video caught the attention of Kareena, leading her to issue a strong warning and make another plea for privacy.

She took to her Instagram account to share a story condemning the media scrutiny of her family. The family reshared the video online and wrote in the caption, "Stop this now. Have a heart. Leave us alone, for God's sake."

Her request has now gone viral online. The video showed new toys being brought into their Satguru Sharan apartment.

Bebo and her family have had a challenging few days as Saif Ali Khan recovers at Lilavati Hospital. Media and paparazzi have been stationed outside their home and the hospital to update social media followers.

Saif is still recovering after being stabbed multiple times during an alleged burglary attempt at his Bandra home. Dr Nitin Dange of Lilavati Hospital provided a health update on Monday, stating that the actor would remain under observation for another day, with a discharge decision expected in the next one to two days.

—ETimes

SANDALWOOD SHOTS

Y MAHESWARA REDDY

Supportive friend

Actor Rishi is happy to have his college mate Dolly Dhananjay unveil the trailer of his latest movie Rudra Garuda Purana at Veeresh Theater on Wednesday. Veteran producer K Manju and a few prominent personalities of Sandalwood were present on the occasion. The movie, which created a lot of curiosity among the moviegoers, is scheduled for release on January 24.

"Rishi is my college mate. I have been familiar with the director for quite a long time. Rudra Garuda Purana looks different. I wish the cast and crew a big success," said Dolly. Rishi thanked Dolly for gracing the function. "I am very happy with the success of the movie's songs. The trailer is also very good. The trailer is an indication of the producer's commitment for this movie," said Rishi, appealing to moviegoers to watch the film at theaters.

Priyanka Kumar, who hails from Mysuru, debuts as a heroine in Sandalwood with this movie. "My father wanted me to focus on academics and complete graduation. I wanted to follow his advice and also act in movies. My father is happy as I did follow his advice. I am also happy to realise my dream of acting," said Priyanka.

Song released

The song – Maaye – of much awaited and delayed movie Monk the Young was released at MMB Legacy on Thursday. The movie was to arrive in theaters last February but got delayed. Now, the movie is scheduled for release next month.

Maaye is sung by Siri Katte with lyrics by Prathap Bhatt and music by Swamynathan.

The specialty of the movie is that it has five producers from different states. Colonel Rajendiran, Lal Chand Khatar, Vijay Babu Reddy, Sarovar, and Gopichand Pula have bankrolled the movie.

"The movie begins from 1869 and the story consists of different periods. The movie will make audiences remain in their seats throughout its course. The movie belongs to the vintage fantasy genre. It has turned out well," said director Maschith Suriya.

The movie will be released through KRG Studios. It features Sarovar, Soundarya Gowda, Kruthi, Ravi Shankar, Saras Manjunath, Ravi Matti, Sumanth, and Shivappa.

Meanwhile, producers Colonel Rajendiran, Lal Chand Khatar, and Gopichand thanked all those who helped and encouraged them. "I thank all our well-wishers and friends for their cooperation and support. We are planning to release the movie in three languages. It has received very good feedback much before arriving in theaters. We are getting enquiries from across the country," said Colonel Rajendrian.

Arjun Janya's phenomenal concert wows fans

With a touch of artistic elements, Bengaluru witnessed a night of electrifying music and unforgettable performances on January 18, as Arjun Janya took the stage at Phoenix Market City. Organised by White Sky, the live concert was a vibrant blend of energy, surprises, and musical brilliance from start to finish.

The event featured not just Arjun Janya but also a talented ensemble of eight other musicians, creating a harmonious experience that resonated deeply with the audience. The setlist was a perfect mix of Arjun's signature hits and iconic tracks, including crowd favorites like 'Jagave Neenu', 'Yenammi Yenammi', 'Nenne Tanaka', 'Preethisuve', 'Chutu Chutu', and 'Bhajare Bhajare Bhajarangi'. The evening also included a heartfelt tribute to AR Rahman with renditions of 'Jai Ho', 'Hamma Hamma' and 'Chinna Chinna Asai', evoking both nostalgia and admiration.

What set this concert apart was its innovative approach to creating an immersive musical experience. Arjun revealed, "My goal was to offer the audience something unprecedented and a unique experience with a closer, more intimate connection to the music." This vision came to life through an unexpected spectacle, over 50 drummers hidden within the crowd, suddenly began playing in the middle of the concert, sending waves of energy through the venue. The synchronised beats, combined with Arjun's dynamic stage presence, created an immersive atmosphere where the audience could truly feel the music. Behind the scenes, meticulous planning and extensive rehearsals—spanning seven to eight days—ensured the performance was flawless.

Adding to the excitement was Arjun Janya's interaction with the audience. Arjun frequently left the stage to sing among his fans, breaking down barriers and ensuring that everyone felt part of the show. The crowd reciprocated with unrestrained enthusiasm, waving their hands, dancing, and singing along to every note.

The event was more than a concert; it was a celebration of true art. The stage gave the essence of sandalwood with artistic decor elements used during performance besides blue and red disco lights.

Earlier Arjun Janya told BM, "An artist's true recognition comes from the sound of applause. When the audience claps, it inspires us to strive harder and do better. If the applause is missing, it signals that we need to improve. Everything we are, we owe to our audience, and we never give up. For me, the greatest reward is seeing a smile on their faces. I aim to give them a sense of relaxation—whether it's a dance song that makes them move, a love song that stirs their hearts, or a devotional song that connects them to divinity." By blending innovation, artistry, and audience engagement, it was an unforgettable night that highlighted the magic of live music at its finest.

—Sanjana CS